Demonstration by refugees from Afghanistan

3660. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Afghanistan have held a demonstration and staged dharna outside the office of the United Nations Development Programme Office in Golf Links, New Delhi to protest against the United Nations' double standards on the treatment of refugees from the same country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action so far taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Government are aware that Afghan nationals who have come to India in recent months have approached UNHCR seeking refugee status and that UNHCR is processing their requests. Government are of the view that all possible assistance is rendered to mitigate the hardships faced by these displaced Afghan nationals. This has been conveyed to UNHCR and to the Afghan Government.

Replacing Indo-Sri Lanka accord

3661. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what were the salient features of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan agreement;

(b) whether the Sri Lankan President Mr. F. Premadasa has made any suggestions to replace the agreement;

(c) if so, what are the details of these suggestions;

(d) what are the reasons put forth by the Sri Lankan President for replacement of the agreement; and

(e) what is the reaction of Government of India in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka was signed on 29th July, 1987. The Agreement aimed at preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka; nurturing, intensifying and strengthening the traditional friendship between India and Sri Lanka; resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka; and ensuring the safety, well-being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities in Sri Lanka. The text of the Agreement was placed on the Table of the House on 31st July, 1987.

(b) to (e) The Sri Lankan President Mr. R. Premadasa has not made any suggestions to replace the Agreement. However, in March 1989, the Government of Sri Lanka forwarded to the Government of India a draft Friendship Treaty between India and Sri Lanka, which contained a provision for supersession of the letters exchanged alongwith the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement on 29th July, 1987. Government of India forwarded its counter-draft for the proposed Treaty to the Government of Sri Lanka in January, 1990. Of late, no official discussions have taken place on this issue.

Economic agreements with Iran

3662. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Iran have recently signed some economic agreements; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) The Sixth Session of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission was held on November 10-11, 1992 at New Delhi. Upon conclusion of the deliberations of the Joint